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# Joseph K. F. Mansfield,

BRIGADIER GENERAL OF THE U. S. ARMY.

A NARRATIVE OF EVENTS CONNECTED  
WITH HIS MORTAL WOUNDING

AT

A N T I E T A M,

Sharpsburg, Maryland,

September 17, 1862.

BY

JOHN MEAD GOULD,

LATE ACTING ADJUTANT 10TH MAINE VOLUNTEERS,  
AND MAJOR 29TH MAINE VETERAN VOLS.

PORTLAND :  
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1895.

Joseph King Fenno Mansfield was born in New Haven, Conn., December 22, 1803. His early education was obtained in the common schools of his state. At the age of fourteen he entered the military academy at West Point, being the youngest of a class of forty. During the five years of his course, he was a careful and earnest student, especially distinguishing himself in the sciences, and graduating in 1822, second in his class.

He was immediately promoted to the Corps of Engineers, in which department he served throughout the Mexican war. In 1832 he was made 1st Lieutenant; three years later Captain.

His gallantry and efficiency during the Mexican war were rewarded by successive brevets of Major, Lt.-Colonel and Colonel of Engineers.

In 1853 Mansfield was appointed Inspector General of the army, and in the prosecution of his duties visited all parts of the country.

At the outbreak of the War of the Rebellion he was in the Northwest, but in April, 1861, was summoned to Washington to take command of the forces there. On May 17, 1861, Mansfield was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in the regular army.

He rendered valuable service at Fortress Monroe, Newport News, Suffolk, and finally at Antietam, where he was mortally wounded, September 17, 1862.

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## NARRATIVE.

It was bad enough and sad enough that Gen. Mansfield should be mortally wounded once, but to be wounded six, seven or eight times in as many localities is too much of a story to let stand unchallenged.

These pages will tell what the members of the 10th Maine Regiment know of the event, but first we will state what others have claimed.

The following places have been pointed out as the spot where Mansfield was wounded and all sorts of particulars have been given. Besides these a man with a magic-lantern is traveling through the country showing Burnside's bridge, and remarking, "Here Mansfield fell."

The spot marked **A** on the map is said to have been vouched for by a "New York officer of Mansfield's staff."

**B** is where the late David R. Miller understood the General was wounded by a sharpshooter stationed in Miller's barn, west of the pike.

**C** is where Capt. Gardiner and Lieut. Dunegan, of Co. K, 125th Penn. Vols., assured me\* that the General fell from his horse in front of their company.

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\*Sept. 17, 1891.

**D** is where, in November, 1894, I found a marker, that had been placed there the October previous, by some one unknown to me. These are the four principal places which have been pointed out to visitors. Still another spot was shown to our party when the 1-10-29th Maine Regiment Association made its first visit to the field, Oct. 4, 1889; it is south of **A**, but I did not note exactly where.

**E.** There has also been published in the National Tribune, which has an immense circulation among the soldiers, the statement\* of Col. John H. Keatley, now Commandant of the Soldier's Home, Marshalltown, Iowa, who locates the place near the Dunker Church.

Col. Keatley's letters show that he has been on the field several times since the war, which makes it harder to believe what would seem very plain otherwise, that his memory of locations has failed him. He appears to have got the recollection of the two woods mixed. Keatley was Sergeant of Co. A, the extreme left of the 125th Penn.

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\*The brigade [Crawford's] had reached a point close to the Hagerstown pike, with the left almost touching the Dunker Church. The brigade was within 50 yards of the turnpike, ready to cross over and into the woods lining the road on the opposite side. These woods were filled with Stonewall Jackson's troops; and their sharpshooters in the foliage were picking off officers. \* \* Notwithstanding the hazard, Gen. Mansfield, instead of sending a staff officer to direct the movement of the troops toward the point intended by him, rode forward himself and gave personal directions, wholly in a matter of detail (the alignment of a single regiment that was making an effort to dress on its colors), and when engaged in that unimportant duty of detail for a corps commander, was shot from the woods and almost instantly killed.

[National Tribune, Washington, D. C., Nov. 16, 1893.]

Mr. Alexander Davis, who resided and worked on the field before and after the battle, points out a place several rods northeast of the present residence of Millard F. Nicodemus (built since the war and not shown on the map). Some Indiana troops were the supposed original authority for this place, which is not far from **B**. It is only fair to Mr. Davis to add that he claims no personal knowledge.

There are several other places that have been described to me in private letters, but these need no mention here.

### WHY SO MANY ERRORS?

Why has there been so much difficulty in identifying the right locality?

There has been no difficulty, none whatever, among those who knew the facts. The errors have all come from the ignorant, the imaginative, and those who have poor memories.

It will be easy, especially for one standing on the ground while reading these pages, to see that very few except the 10th Maine would witness the event, as we were so nearly isolated and almost hidden. We made very little account at the time, of what is now considered an important event in the history of the battle. It then appeared to us as only one of the many tragedies in the great slaughter. Nothing was done at the time to mark the spot, and hardly a note of the event was recorded.

## REGIMENTAL EXCURSION.

In 1889, the 1-10-29th Maine Regiment\* Association made an excursion to the various battle fields in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia where the regiment had fought. Friday, October 4th, was the day of the visit to Antietam. Not one of the company had been there for twenty-five years, yet on arriving in East Woods we readily and surely identified the fighting position of the regiment, which was known as the "Tenth Maine," at the time of the battle. We found that the west face of the woods had been considerably cut away, and that many of the trees inside the woods had been felled, but there was no serious change in the neighborhood where we fought, excepting that a road had been laid out exactly along the line of battle where we fired our first volley. We have since learned that in 1872, the County bought a fifteen feet strip of land, 961 feet long, bordering that part of the northeast edge of the woods, which lies between Samuel Poffenberger's lane and the Smoke-town road, and moved the "worm fence" fifteen feet into the field.† Excepting as these changes affected

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\*These three organizations were virtually one. The 1st Regiment, after serving three months in 1861, re-organized as the 10th, to serve till May, 1863, when it was again recruited and re-organized as the 29th, to serve three years more. The 10th Battalion was that portion of the 10th Regiment which was not discharged in 1863. Excepting eight weeks in the fall of 1861, the regiment or battalion was in "the field" during the entire war, and for more than a year afterward.

†The map does not show this new or "Keedysville road." It now runs directly past Michael Miller's gate to Sam Poffenberger's, thence up Sam's old lane to the woods, there turning west enters the Smoke-town road, where the right of the 10th Maine fought—near M on the map. The lane from



the view, all agreed that everything in our vicinity had a "natural look." The chief features were "the bushes," directly in rear of our right companies; the Croasdale Knoll, further to the right and rear; the Smoketown Road, which enters East Woods between the bushes and the Knoll, and runs past our front through the woods; the low land in our right front; the "open," easily discernable through the woods; the rising land with its ledges, big and little, in the front; the denser woods in the left front; the worm fence before noted, and the long ledge behind it, against which our left companies sheltered themselves by Captain Jordan's thoughtful guidance; and the gully beginning in the rear of our position and leading down to the great stone barn and stone mansion,\* with its immense spring of water.

The large oak in rear of our right, to which Col. Beal crawled after he was wounded, was still standing a few paces up (northeast) the Smoketown road, and another good sized tree nearer the front was recognized by Capt. (then Sergt.) Goss as the one from which he first opened fire. Lt.-Col. Emerson (Capt. of H, the right Co.) stood where he stood in 1862 and pointed out to our guests place after place which he recognized.

Many of "the bushes" of 1862 had grown into sizable trees; they, with Beal's and Goss's trees and the

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M. Miller's to Morrison's has been closed, and also that part of Sam's lane which was in East Woods.

\* Samuel Poffenberger's. Erroneously marked Dunbar's Mills on the old maps.

Smoketown road fence, had been a serious obstacle to the advance of our right companies.

The scar, or depression in the ground, where we had buried a few of our dead (northeast of Beal's tree), was still visible, but repeated plowing since 1889 has entirely effaced it.

Our excursion was entirely for pleasure; we had no thought of controversy, nor even of the enlightenment of the Sharpsburg people, who knew nothing of the true locality where Mansfield was wounded, but were showing two or three erroneous places to visitors. We defended the truth, photographed the position, but found it difficult for several reasons to decide by several feet upon the *exact* spot of the wounding.

It is necessary now to go back to 1862 and tell the story of the battle as seen by the 10th Maine; and as since the war a generation has grown up that knows nothing of the way soldiers are arranged for marching and fighting, it is best to give a great many explanations that may seem unnecessary to an old soldier.

#### THE PART TAKEN BY THE 10TH MAINE.

The 12th Army Corps, Mansfield commanding, marched on the Boonsboro pike, late at night of Sept. 16th, from "the center" through Keedysville to the farm of George Line (G. Lyons on the old maps) and there rested till daybreak. Gen. Mansfield slept on the west side of a fence which ran south from Line's

garden to woods. His bed was the grass and his roof a blanket. The 10th Maine was on the east side of the fence (see map), and some of our boys who indulged in loud talk were ordered by the General to lower their tones to a whisper. The other regiments of our brigade were near us, while the other brigades of the corps appeared to be behind ours (or east). Our brigade\* was the advance of the corps, and marched a little before 5 o'clock on the morning of the battle, first to the west across the Smoketown road, and nearly to John Poffenberger's, and then south to nearly abreast of Joseph Poffenberger's (marked 6.20 on the map), and there halted for almost an hour, during all of which time, that is from before 5 A. M., Hooker's corps was fighting in and around "the great cornfield," the enemy being south and west of it.

As well as could be judged, all of the 12th corps followed our movements, and halted to the right or left of the rear of our brigade.

The 124th and 125th Penn. were detached from the brigade at some early hour, but at 7.20 by my watch, which may have been five to ten minutes fast, the other four regiments were started for the fight.

The 10th Maine was guided by Gen. Mansfield in person. We had all seen him for some time previous sitting on his horse at the northwest corner of the East Wood, marked W on the map. He hurried

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\* Crawford's brigade, 16th Penn., Col. Knipe; 10th Maine, Col. Beal; 28th N.Y., fragment, Capt. Mapes; 124th Penn., Col. Hawley; 125th Penn., Col. Higgins; 128th Penn., Col. Samuel Croasdale (killed.)

us, first to the front, down hill through a field where several piles of stone lay, the Smoketown road still being on our left. We barely entered the "ten acre cornfield" when Mansfield beckoned us to move to our left. We then marched a few steps by what the tactics call "Left oblique," but did not gain ground to the left sufficiently to suit the General, so Col. Beal commanded "Left flank," whereupon each man faced east, and we presently knocked over the two fences of the Smoketown road and marched into Sam Poffenberger's field. While going across the Smoketown road Gen. Hooker rode from the woods (M) and told Col. Beal "The enemy are breaking through my lines; you must hold these woods," (meaning East Woods.)

After crossing the road, bullets from the enemy began to whiz over and around us. When well into Sam Poffenberger's field the Colonel commanded "Right flank," then each man again faced south (or west of south to be more exact) and we all marched straight for the enemy, whom some of us could see in the woods, close to where our Mansfield marker is now standing, marked M on the map.

The 10th Maine was in "double column at half distance" (or "double column in mass," as some remember.)



Each line in the diagram represents about 15 men allfacing "front." In this order we had bivouacked and marched to Sam Poffenberger's field, only that while in the ten acre corn field every man turned on his left heel and marched toward what had been the "left," until arriving in Sam Poffenberger's field, where a turn of each man to his right, or the technical "front," brought us to our original position.

Apparently fifty to a hundred Confederates were strung along the fence (M) firing at us. They had the immense advantage that they could rest their rifles on the fence and fire into us, massed ten ranks deep, while we could only march and "take it."

It was high time to deploy,\* and Col. Beal proposed to do so, but Gen. Mansfield said "No," and remarked that a regiment can be easier handled "in mass" than "in line"; which is very true in the abstract. Gen. Mansfield then rode away, and Col. Beal, hardly waiting for him to get out of sight, ordered the regiment to deploy in double quick time. Everybody felt the need of haste.

In the execution of this order Companies I and G, with the color guard, continued marching straight ahead at the ordinary step, just as if no order had

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\* That is, to bring the men "into line"—the position they should be in for fighting; since while in mass, only Companies I and G could fire their muskets, while a fairly well aimed bullet from the enemy would be almost sure to hit one or more of us.

Front.

Colors.

Left. I F [C] [D] B | G [ ] I | L | K | A | H | Right.

Deployed.

been given. The men of Co's F, C, D and B turned to their left and ran east—toward Sam Poffenberger's. Co's H, A, K and E turned to the right and ran west—toward the Smoketown road. As fast as the respective companies "uncovered," they came to "Front" and advanced to the front, still running. In other words, after Co. B had run east and Co. E west, the length of their company, each man turned to the front (or the woods) and the company ran till B was left of G, and E was right of I, which being done B and E quit running and took up the ordinary step. It will be seen that D had twice as far to run to the east, and K twice as far to the west, and that C and A ran three times, and F and H four times as far as B and E had done.

I have been so circumstantial in describing all this for two reasons. First, because standing to-day on the battle line of the 10th Maine (which is the position the enemy occupied at the time the 10th was deploying), and looking over the fence northeast into Sam Poffenberger's field, as the Confederates did, one will see how it was that when the 10th Me., with about 300\* men, came to deploy and to advance afterward, the Smoketown fence, and the trees of Beal and Goss, with "the bushes," were an obstacle to the right companies, and the ledge would have

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\*The 10th Maine went into battle with 21 officers, and 276 men with muskets.

Loss. 3 officers and 28 men killed and mortally wounded.

5 officers and 35 men wounded.

0 prisoners.

Total killed and wounded 71, or 24 per cent. of number engaged.

been somewhat so to the left companies if Capt. Jordan had not halted his division\* behind it. He did this for shelter as the first reason, and because, perceiving there was no Union force on our left, he knew it was better to have our left "refused" and hence not so easily "flanked" by the enemy. (See map.)

Second, and more particularly, I wish to state that on Nov. 9, 1894, Major Wm. N. Robbins, 4th Alabama, Law's brigade, Hood's division of the Confederate army, met me by appointment on the field and compared experiences. We had previously had a long correspondence, in which he persistently referred to seeing a "hesitating" Union regiment which he ordered his troops to fire into. The result of this fire was the dispersion of the Union regiment, whereupon he himself went over towards his left and attended to affairs nearer the great cornfield. After a great deal of correspondence with every Union and Confederate regiment that fought in the vicinity, I could not learn of any Union regiment that was dispersed, either in Sam Poffenberger's field, or in the "field of stone piles," nor could the Major determine, by consulting the map alone, whether it was the Smoketown road or Joe Poffenberger's bypath that was on his left when the Union regiment dispersed.

In November, '94, when we met on the ground, he was sure that the Smoketown road was on his left. Hence it was plain that it could be only the 10th Maine that "dispersed."

Yet we certainly did not!!

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\* A regimental division is two companies; C and F in the present case.

For a little while it was a very dark problem ; then it dawned upon me that from where the Major stood he did not see (because of the slight rise of land between us) the movement of our center and right as we deployed, while the running to the east of Co's F, C, D and G appeared to him precisely like a dispersion. I do not know a better illustration of how difficult it is to see things in battle as they really are happening.

With this vexed question settled, it becomes easier to understand the movements of other regiments, but these do not concern us now, further than that there was no other regiment at the time and place for Maj. Robbins to "disperse."

The result of this extensive correspondence assures me that Gen. Mansfield was wounded by Maj. Robbins' command, to which I will refer presently.

The reader will readily see how easily we can remember these prominent features of the field, and how surely we can identify our old position after the lapse of years. We are not confronted with the difficult task which those have who fought in the open field with no striking landmarks near ; and where the position of the fences have been changed.

To resume the narrative : The enemy fell back as we approached. On arriving at the fence, we opened fire, and then rushed into the woods for such cover as the trees, &c., offered. The enemy also was well scattered through the woods, behind numerous ledges, logs, trees and piles of cord wood, a few men only being east of the Smoketown road, which at that time was not fenced.



The fire of the enemy was exceedingly well aimed; and as the distance between us was only about one hundred yards we had a bloody time of it.

We had fired only a few rounds, before some of us noticed Gens. Mansfield and Crawford, and other mounted officers, over on the Croasdale Knoll, which, with the intervening ground, was open woods. Mansfield at once came galloping down the hill and passed through the scattered men of the right companies, shouting "Cease firing, you are firing into our own men!" He rode very rapidly and fearlessly till he reached the place where our line bent to the rear (behind the fence). Captain Jordan now ran forward as far as the fence, along the top of the ledge behind which his division was sheltered, and insisted that Gen. Mansfield should "Look and see." He and Sergt. Burnham pointed out particular men of the enemy, who were not 50 yards away, that were then aiming their rifles at us and at him. Doubtless the General was wounded while talking with Jordan; at all events he was convinced, and remarked, "Yes, you are right." He then turned his horse and passed along to the lower land where the fence was down, and attempted to go through, but the horse, which also appeared to be wounded, refused to step into the trap-like mass of rails and rubbish, or to jump over. The General thereupon promptly dismounted and led the horse into Sam Poffenberger's field. I had noticed the General when he was with Crawford on the Croasdale Knoll, and had followed him with my eye in all his ride. Col. Beal was having a great deal of

trouble with his horse, which was wounded and appeared to be trying to throw the Colonel, and I was slow in starting from the Colonel to see what Mansfield's gestures meant. I met him at the gap in the fence. As he dismounted his coat blew open, and I saw that blood was streaming down the right side of his vest.

The General was very quick in all his motions and attempted to mount as soon as the horse had got through the fence; but his strength was evidently failing, and he yielded to the suggestion that we should take him to a surgeon. What became of the orderly and the horse none of us noticed. Sergt. Joe Merrill, of Co. F, helped carry the General off; a young black man, who had just come up the ravine from the direction of Sam Poffenberger's, was pressed into service. He was very unwilling to come with us, as he was hunting for Capt. Somebody's\* frying-pan, the loss of which disturbed him more than the National calamity. Joe Merrill was so incensed at the Contraband's sauciness, his indifference to the danger, and his slovenly way of handling the General, that he begged me to put down the General and "fix things." It turned out that Joe's intention was to "fix" the darkey, whom he cuffed and kicked most unmercifully. We then got a blanket and other men, and I started off ahead of the re-formed squad† to find a Surgeon.

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\* He named an officer and regiment of Hooker's Corps, both of which I forgot before the day was ended.

† Sergt. Joe Merrill, Co. F; Private Storer S. Knight, Co. B; Private James Sheridan, Co. C.

The road had appeared to be full of ambulances a half hour before, but all were gone now and we carried the General clear to Sam Poffenberger's woods. Here I saw Gen. Geo. H. Gordon, commanding the 3d brigade of our division, told him the story and asked him to send an orderly or aide for a surgeon, but he said he could not as he had neither with him. He was moving the 107th N. Y., a new, large regiment; an ambulance was found and two medical officers, just inside the woods, a few steps north of where Sam Poffenberger's gate now hangs, marked K on the map. The younger doctor put a flask to the General's mouth. The whiskey, or whatever it was, choked the General and added greatly to his distress. We put the General into the ambulance and that was the last I saw of him. Lieut. Edw. R. Witman, 46th Penn., an aide to Gen. Crawford, had been sent back by Gen. Crawford, who evidently saw Mansfield in his fatal ride. I turned over ambulance\* and all to him and returned to the regiment; but when I arrived I found that Tyndale's and Stainrook's brigades of Greene's division had swept the woods a little while after I had gone, carrying a dozen or two of the 10th with them, and that Gen. Gordon had followed later with the 107th New York. Only twenty or thirty men of the 10th Maine were left on the ground; the colors and the others had gone out and taken position somewhere back of the Croasdale Knoll.

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\* Doctor Francis B. Davidson, of the 125th Penn., met the ambulance near Line's house and turned it in there, and there the General was treated and died, as everybody knows.

We buried some of the dead of our regiment in the north edge of "the bushes," near to the Smoketown road fence. During the remainder of the day a very large number of the officers and men of the regiment were detailed by various medical officers to bring off wounded men from "the cornfield" and woods, for the ambulance department was not organized at that time as it was later in the war, and was not equal to the task.

We also buried the Confederate dead that fell in our immediate front, but somehow the cracker-box head boards were marked (20 GEO), and this little error made trouble enough for me as Historian of the regimental association.

At night we bivouacked north of Sam Poffenberger's woods, and on the 18th marched into East Woods, just beyond where we fought, halted, stacked arms, and during the truce dispersed to look at all the sights in our neighborhood.

On the 19th we were moved into the woods again and took a more extended view of the field.

In June, 1863, the 10th Maine Battalion, in its march to Gettysburg, passed near the field, and four or five of those who had been in the battle turned aside to see the old grounds. The graves near "the bushes" and those of the "20th Georgia" were just as we left them.

Lt.-Col. Fillebrown also visited the field some time during the war, and a party was sent out to bring home the remains of Capt. Furbish, which had been buried near Sam Poffenberger's.

It will therefore be seen that almost every one of the 10th Maine, who came out of the battle unharmed, had a chance to view the field and to impress its topographical features in his mind. Therefore, when a dozen or more of us who had fought in the battle, visited the field in 1889, we had no difficulty whatever in finding our locality, and our testimony is sufficient; but more can be cited.

Mr. Sam Poffenberger, by whom I have been most hospitably entertained in two of my trips (1891 and 1894), assures me that the 10th Maine graves remained near "the bushes" until removed to the National Cemetery. He also says the graves of the 111th Penn. Vols., during all that time, were under the ledge where the left of our regiment (Co. F) rested. The 111th Penn. Vols. relieved us.

The course of the march of the 107th N. Y. has been identified by members of that regiment who have visited the field; and letters from several of them confirm the statements made on page 17.

The line of march of the 3d Maryland and 102d N. Y., who were on the left of the 111th Penn. Vols., has been fully identified and exactly joins our identification.

For substantial evidence of the truth of our narrative we will say that Maj. Jordan still has the cord which fell from the General's hat as he waved it at our left companies in trying to make them cease firing.

The hat itself, which fell off inside the fence when the General gave himself into the care of Joe Merrill

and the others of us, got into the hands of Gen. Nye (Capt. of Co. K) and he forwarded it to the family, and has the acknowledgment of receipt of the same.

Geo. W. Knowlton, Esq., Boston, Mass., has a pair of blood-stained gloves sent home by his father, Maj. Wm. Knowlton, (Capt. Co. F, but not present at Antietam) who wrote and afterward explained to Mrs. Knowlton that one of his men picked them up and gave them to him.

It will now be seen that though the regimental excursion of 1889 was positive of the position of the regiment, we could not decide *exactly* where Mansfield fell, for it so happened that the main witnesses of the wounding were not then present. On returning home, I made a special study of the facts, and found that Maj. Jordan was sure he could find "the boulder" which he mounted to attract the attention of Gen. Mansfield. Maj. Redlon, who was in command of Co. D, a man of remarkable memory and faculty of observation, also assured me that Maj. Jordan was there. Jordan is a short man, and naturally mounted the ledge to "get even" with the General. Sergeant Burnham, of Co. C, while living, frequently spoke of this to me.

On September 17, 1891, Maj. Jordan, Surgeon Howard and myself accepted the invitation of the 125th Penn. to visit the field with them. Major Jordan readily found the ledge without my assistance, on the afternoon of the 16th, but "the boulder\*" was

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\* An out-cropping spur of limestone ledge, common all over the field.

not visible. During the evening Mr. Sam. Poffenberger told of the change of fence and the building of the new road.

Early in the morning we went again, and there under the fence, with a small red cedar growing over it, was "the boulder." We easily changed the fence and obliterated the road in our mind's eyes, and thereupon everything came out clearly. We know precisely where the General sat on his horse when he talked with Jordan, and there it is, as we understand it, he was wounded. We borrowed tools from our host and set up our marker forthwith for the edification of our 125th Penn. comrades, who soon came trooping down on us. Maj. Jordan staid by his marker all day, defending the truth most vigorously. I went with Capt. Gardner and Lieut. Dune-gan to the place where they say Mansfield fell from his saddle and was borne off by two of their men. The place is about 600 yards from where Mansfield was shot. From others of the 125th it was evident that Gen. Mansfield's riderless horse did bring up at about the place pointed out, but we know the fatal shot came to the General himself while he halted in front of Captain Jordan.

The thoroughly good feeling shown to us by all of these good fellows of the old 125th has not been forgotten, and never can be; and in telling the true story I am not a little embarrassed with the fact that I seem to make reflections upon some of them.

### THE CONFEDERATES.

It has been stated that the 10th Maine was the extreme left of Hooker's command (1st and 12th corps) during the 40 minutes, more or less, the regiment was engaged. The Confederate troops opposed to us and to our neighbors\* on the right were from Hood's division.†

The 4th Alabama was the right regiment of all, and they came up the Smoketown road from the West Woods in a hurry. On reaching East Woods they deployed and advanced "in line." On nearing the woods Maj. Robbins met what he understood at the time was a half regiment of Georgia troops, who told him they had already been in the fight and would go in again. He ordered them to form on his right and advance in line with him. All was done in great haste, and in consequence of this and the broken character of the woods and the rush for shelter, the two commands were mixed all together, the Georgians, however, being naturally in preponderance on the Confederate right. Some time after they had been engaged the 5th Texas, under Capt. Turner, was sent in by Gen. Hood, and they mixed in with the others wherever a chance offered. All this I have learned by correspondence with many members from each of Hood's regiments.

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\* These were, as we understand, the 128th Penn., a new, large regiment, and the fragments of the 28th N. Y. and 46th Penn. I have not definitely learned *exactly* where the last two were while the 10th Maine was fighting, but we saw very plainly the 128th Penn. upon the Croasdale Knoll.

† Law's brigade and Wofford's or "The Texas" brigade.



After a long and intensely exciting hunt for the Georgia regiment that this battalion belonged to—Major Robbins remembering only that their number was “in the twenties”—I have learned that it was the skirmisher battalion of Gen. Colquitt’s brigade of D. H. Hill’s division, composed of one company each (Co. A generally) from the five regiments of his brigade, viz: 6th, 23d, 27th and 28th Georgia and 13th Alabama, under Capt. Wm. M. Arnold, of the 6th Georgia. We therefore made a mistake in the number only when we marked those head boards “20 Georgia.” This battalion got into the fight an hour or more before their brigade and fought independently of it. The troops under Robbins, Turner and Arnold are the only Confederates, so far as I can learn, that did heavy fighting in East Woods.\* There were no better troops in the Confederate army; they suffered a loss in killed and wounded of nearly one-half, and probably inflicted a still larger numerical loss upon the Union troops.

### OFFICIAL REPORTS.

We will next look at the Official Reports bearing on the subject. (See Vol. XIX, Part I, Official Record, War of the Rebellion, U. S. Gov’t printing office.)

#### I. In Lt.-Col. Fillebrown’s† report (10th Maine)

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\* Garland’s brigade was in the woods a short time, and a few men from some Confederate command were in the extreme northern edge when Tynedale approached it.

† Dear old “Jim” has long since “passed over to the other side,” and I cannot tell why he made such a strange report, nor why he didn’t let me, his Adjutant, know about it and have a copy to file away.

there is no mention of the event, nor is there anything else that has the merit of being both true and worth recording. (See page 489.)

Ordinarily he was one of the most genial and accommodating of men; but when sick and vexed, as plainly he was when he made that report, he could dash off just such a jumble, and send it in to head quarters before the ink was dry.

It is due to him to say that he was run over and kicked in the bowels by Col. Beal's horse just at the moment Col. Beal himself was wounded; and when, but for the untimely kick, "Jim" might have led us on to victory and covered himself with glory.

II. In Col. Jacob Higgins' (125th Penn.) report we have—

"Previous to this Gen. Mansfield fell, some of my men carrying him off the field on their muskets until a blanket was procured." (Page 492, Vol. XIX.)

It cannot be determined from the report, exactly when or where "this" was; but it was plainly early in the morning and before the 125th entered West Wood, where (and not in East Wood) they fought.

This report annoyed me much when I first saw it in 1887, but Col. Higgins has written to me that he knows nothing personally of the event but reported it because officers whom he trusted assured him it was so.

III. Col. Knipe, (46 Penn.) who made the brigade report, simply mentions that Mansfield was wounded.

IV. In Gen. Crawford's report we read:

“Gen. Mansfield, the corps commander, had been mortally “wounded, and was borne past my position to the rear.” (Page 485, Vol. XIX, Part I.)

This “position” is not defined further than to state that it was “Miller’s” woods, or “East woods,” as we now call them.

V. Gen. Williams, commanding 1st division and succeeding Mansfield in command of the corps, says:

“While the deployment [of the 12th corps] was going on and “before the leading regiments were fairly engaged, it was reported to me that the veteran and distinguished commander “of the corps was mortally wounded.” (Page 475, Vol. XIX.)

VI. Gen. Geo. H. Gordon, commanding 3d brigade, 1st division, says:

“Gen. Mansfield had been mortally wounded at the commencement of the action, while making a bold reconnoissance of the “woods through which we had just dashed.” (Page 495, Vol. XIX.)

VII. We find the following in the report of Gen. Edwin V. Sumner, “commanding 2d and 12th corps.” He also commanded the 1st corps upon his arrival in our part of the field, about 9 A. M.:

“General Mansfield, a worthy and gallant veteran, was unfortunately mortally wounded while leading his corps into “action.” (Page 275, Vol. XIX.)

VIII. Gen. Hooker, commanding 1st corps and having the 12th under his orders, makes no mention of the wounding.

IX. Gen. McClellan, commanding the Union army, thus refers to the deployment of the 12th corps:

“During the deployment, that gallant veteran, Gen. Mansfield, “fell mortally wounded while examining the ground in front of “his troops.” (Page 56, Vol. XIX.)

It should be stated that Vol. XIX was not published until October, 1887—twenty-five years after the battle.

Besides these unsatisfactory official reports, we have the following authentic accounts, that have been made public from time to time, and should have furnished the world with the truth. I noticed that the newspapers of the day had little to say about the event; accordingly, a few weeks after the battle I wrote an account and forwarded it to my father, who sent it to the Hon. Benjamin Douglas, a prominent citizen of Middletown, Conn.—Mansfield’s home. Mr. Douglas acknowledged the receipt, and showed his appreciation when we were publishing our regimental history,\* by furnishing gratis the portraits of the general. This letter was published in the Portland, Me., papers.

The regimental history, published in 1871, has a very minute account of the event. About 700 copies of it were sold.

The report for 1862 of the Adjutant General of Maine also has a narrative of the battle, embraced in the report of Col. Beal, who returned to duty before the end of the year. (Page 74, main report.)

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\* History 1st–10th–29th Maine regiment, May 3, 1861, to June 21, 1866. Stephen Berry, Publisher, Portland, Me.

**GENERALS AND STAFF DID NOT WITNESS.**

A singular phase in this case is the fact that none of Gen. Mansfield's subordinate commanders excepting Gen. Crawford, and none of Mansfield's staff, witnessed the wounding. In the three days he was our commander none of us saw a staff officer with him. It was only a vague memory of a lost and forgotten general order, and the reference to "Captain Dyer" in the General's memorial volume,\* that suggested the possibility there was a staff. In 1890 to '94 I made a special and persistent effort to learn who his staff were; also who was the orderly and who the colored servant that we saw with him. The orderly and servant we have not found. After much writing I learned that Samuel M. Mansfield,† a son of the General, had been appointed an Aide but had not been able to join his father. Maj. Clarence H. Dyer, at that time Captain and A. A. G., had accompanied the General from Washington and was on duty with him till his death.

Furthermore, Gen. James W. Forsyth, then a Captain, (familiarily known as "Toney") was temporarily assigned as aide-de-camp to Mansfield by Gen. McClellan, at whose head quarters Forsyth was then serving. These two were "present"; but Gen. Mansfield kept them flying so constantly that none of us recognized them as his staff.

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\* Memorial of Gen. Mansfield, United States Army, Boston, T. R. Marvin & Son, 1862.

† Now Lt.-Col. of Engineers, U. S. A.

There are also shadowy hints from various sources that a Lieutenant of cavalry, name and regiment not stated, lost his opportunity for a day of glory by too frequent sips of what was known as "commissary."

Gen. Forsyth writes (1891) that he was sent by Mansfield to "bring up the divisions of the corps" and that he "was not with Gen. Mansfield when he received his death wound."

Maj. Dyer writes (1891):

"At the time the General was mortally wounded, I was not near him, as he had given me an order to bring the command of Gen. Crawford to the front. It was halted somewhat to the rear and our left. When I returned I found that the General was being removed to the rear, but by the men of what regiment I do not know. I remained with him until he died, which must have been about 1 o'clock P. M., 17th. \* \* Where the General fell was a little to our left of the woods—a cornfield was directly in front. I am very sure that the General was not killed by the men of the [Confederate] command in front of the 10th Maine. I am positive as to this."

Here is another instance how impossible it is to see everything as it is in battle. Apparently Maj. Dyer did not see the General hurrying the 10th Maine across the brigade front.

#### GEN. MANSFIELD'S MISTAKE.

The next question that arises is, why did Gen. Mansfield suppose the 10th Maine was firing into Union troops?

While the corps was waiting in the vicinity of Joe Poffenberger's, (marked 6:20 on the map) from about

6:20 to 7:20 A.M., Gen. Mansfield was seen frequently by almost every soldier of the corps. In hundreds of letters, from the various regiments and batteries, there is a common agreement that the General was moving around the field continually. He seemed to be everywhere. Although he appeared like a calm and dignified old gentleman when he took command of the corps two days before, on this fatal morning he was the personification of vigor, dash and enthusiasm. As before stated, he remained some minutes at the northwest corner of East Woods (W on the map), observing the battle. One gets a fine view of the field from there and he must have got a good insight into the way Hooker's corps was fighting. Presumably the tide was turning against Hooker, and as likely Mansfield had been called upon by him for reinforcements, but when Mansfield left the northwest corner to set his corps in motion, the East Woods, if I have rightly interpreted the reports and correspondence, was still in possession of Union troops. Probably, almost at the same time that Mansfield quitted his lookout, the Confederate brigade of Law (Hood's division) came charging out of West Woods, the 4th Alabama on the right running up the Smoke-town road, as before stated, and entering the woods at the south-west corner where the Georgia battalion joined on its right. The movements of all of Hood's troops were exceedingly rapid.

How much time elapsed from Mansfield's leaving his lookout to his being wounded, I can only roughly estimate at from fifteen to twenty minutes, but it

was time enough to change the condition of affairs very materially, and I cannot help thinking the time passed very quickly to him, and that he did not realize the fact that the remnants of Rickett's division had been driven out of the woods and cornfield, nor even did he suppose it was possible. Wise or unwise, it was entirely in keeping with everything else the General did during the three days he was with us, for him to come himself and see what we were doing; and like everything else, he did it with the utmost promptness. It was this habit of personal attention to details, and his other characteristic of rapid flying here and there, that make it so difficult for many of the soldiers of the 12th corps to believe he was wounded when and where he was.

#### A WORD IN CLOSING.

In this narrative it has been impossible to avoid frequent reference to myself and to my regiment, but there is nothing in the Mansfield incident of special credit to any of us. We were there and saw it; we live and can prove it; this is the whole story in a nut shell.

I have always regretted that I left the regiment even on so important a mission. At the time, I supposed it was only to be for a moment, and that with three field officers on duty I could be spared. As for the regiment, we succeeded so very much better later in the war, that we have not been in the habit of making great claims for the part we took in Antietam.



Many other Union regiments fought longer, struggled harder, did more effective service and lost more men than we.

The Confederates opposed to us appeared to be equal to us in numbers and they were superior in experience and all that experience gives. On all other fields, from the beginning to the end of our long service, we never had to face their equals. Everybody knows that troops fighting under the eye of Stonewall Jackson, and directed by Hood, were a terrible foe. Our particular opponents were all good marksmen, and the constant call of their officers, "Aim low," appeared to us entirely unnecessary.

It was an awful morning; our comrades went down one after another with a most disheartening frequency, pierced with bullets from men who were half concealed, or who dodged quickly back to a safe cover the moment they fired. We think it was enough for us to "hold our own" till Greene's men swept in with their "terrible and overwhelming attack." \*

From all this story, I hope the reader will see why the wounding of Gen. Mansfield, which is the all important part in this narrative, is only a secondary matter to the men of the Tenth Maine Regiment, and why misrepresentations and errors have gone undisputed so many years. We never considered it *our* business to set history aright, until we saw that our testimony was discredited and found our statement of

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\* Quotation from Major Robbins.



fact treated as only one of the many stories of the wagon-drivers of Sharpsburg.

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### EXPLANATION OF THE MAP.

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The following map is based upon one issued November, 1894, by the "Antietam Board." This in turn was based upon the so-called "Michler" map from the office of the U. S. Engineers, which, while correct in the main, has many errors of detail, and it is not likely that all of them have yet been discovered by the Board. Indeed, one object of the Board in issuing the map, was to invite criticism and corrections from the soldiers and others.

The positions of the troops cannot be shown with anything like accuracy and clearness on so small a map, and are omitted excepting a few needed to illustrate the narrative, but it may be said in a general way, that just before Gen. Mansfield was wounded, the Union forces, under Hooker, were pushed out of "the great cornfield" and the East Woods. The 12th Corps, (Mansfield's), with some help from the remnants of the 1st Corps (Hooker's), stopped the advance of the Confederates under Hood, and in turn drove them back to West Woods.

At the time Mansfield was wounded, Major Robbins' command in East Woods was the extreme right of the troops of the Confederate left wing (Jackson's) *actually engaged*. Their line ran, with many turns and several intervals, from the woods through the great cornfield to the northern part of West Woods. Not many men in either army were firing their muskets at the moment Mansfield was shot, but the two or three thousand on each side, who were engaged, were very fiercely contending for their positions.



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